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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

No. 345



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CONTENTS

WORLDWIDE AFFAIRS

- Baltic Environment Commission Studying Oil, PCB, DDT
(HELSINGIN SANOMAT, 17 Feb 82) 1

ASIA

AUSTRALIA

- Tasmania Government Decides to Dam Franklin; Election Likely
(Various sources, various dates) 3
- Forming of Opposition, by Aileen Berry
Impact of Dam, by Aileen Berry
Suspected Sabotage Reaction, by Paul Tapp
Editorial Criticism
- World Heritage Bid for Southwest Tasmania Controversial
(Ken Haley; THE AGE, 25 Jan 82) 7
- Radioactive Contamination Found at NSW Coastal Resort
(Various sources, various dates) 8
- Sources in Sand Mining
Queensland Fears, by Colin Mackay, Steve Harvey
Construction Ban, by Jill Margo
- Briefs
Poll on Reef Drilling 11

INDIA

- Study Reveals Pollution Turning Ganges Into 'River of Poison'
(Sumanta Banerjee; POST, 21 Feb 82) 12

States Urged To Improve Health of Soil (Editorial; THE HINDU, 12 Feb 82)	15
MALAYSIA	
Banned Pesticides Still Widely Used in Malaysia (Paul Icamina; THE MUSLIM, 8 Feb 82)	16
NEPAL	
Article Reports on Nepal's Shrinking Forests (Ashok R. Pandey, Kunda Dixit; INDIA TODAY, 28 Feb 82)	18
PAKISTAN	
Need for National Environmental Legislation for Pakistan Outlined (Ghulam Hussain, Qamar Baloch; KHYBER MAIL, 3 Mar 82)	21
Briefs Body for Moenjodaro Afforestation	24
VIETNAM	
Briefs Environmental Protection Laws Needed	25
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	
NIGERIA	
Erosion Takes Houses, Frightens Population in Benue (Mohammed Salau; NEW NIGERIAN, 5 Mar 82)	26
'Green Revolution' Official Urges Non-Politicization (DAILY TIMES, 6 Mar 82)	27
ZIMBABWE	
Big Drive To Save Cattle Speeds Up (THE HERALD, 16 Mar 82)	28
Muzenda Warns of Drought Relief Nepotism (THE HERALD, 15 Mar 82)	29
Farmers Allegedly Cashing in on Drought (THE HERALD, 16 Mar 82)	31
Agritex Reports Threat of Dry Boreholes (THE HERALD, 13 Mar 82)	32

Rain Raises Hopes, But Situation Grim (THE HERALD, 1 Mar 82)	33
Solution to Ngamo Dam Pollution Sought (THE HERALD, 2 Mar 82)	34
Briefs	
Drought Endangers Wildlife	35

WEST EUROPE

FRANCE

Government Seen Unwilling To Regulate Pollution (Francis Caballero; LE MONDE, 3 Feb 82)	36
--	----

GREECE

Briefs	
Air Pollution Anticipatory Measures	38
Salonica Noise Pollution	38

BALTIC ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION STUDYING OIL, PCB, DDT

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 17 Feb p 8

[Article: "Cooperation in Protection of Baltic Sea Being Developed"]

[Text] Cooperation for the purpose of protecting the Baltic Sea is being defined at a meeting of the Baltic Sea Environmental Protection Commission, which has begun in Helsinki. The commission's general secretary, Professor Aarne Voipio, considers the most important subject of the meeting to be a decision on the compilation of a handbook which could be used as a definitive guideline in the event of a possible oil spill in the Baltic Sea. The necessary cooperation could be organized with the help of this handbook.

The 4-day meeting will make draft recommendations for stricter stipulations for the purpose of preventing the emission of PCB- and DDT-substances, which are harmful to the environment, into the sea. The meeting is being attended by representatives of all the states bordering the Baltic Sea as well as observers from several international environmental protection and oceanic research organizations.

Commission Chairman Raimo Pekkanen emphasized the necessity of compiling recommendations for protecting the Baltic Sea and the importance of their careful preparation.

Pekkanen also mentioned the oil spill from the tanker Globe Asim last November near the Port of Klaipeda in Lithuania. In this accident 16,000 tons of heavy fuel oil was released into the sea. Pekkanen gave much credit to the clean-up operations on the part of the Soviets after this destructive accident.

A special handbook compiled as a guideline for cleaning up oil spills in the Baltic Sea would contain, among other things, instructions for requesting assistance, regulations concerning radio communications, and clarifications concerning command relations in clean-up operations in various areas. It would also contain instructions concerning economic compensation, states Chief Engineer Seppo Hilden of the Maritime Administration, who is a member of the Finnish delegation to the commission's meeting.

It is hoped that the first version of the handbook will be completed for approval by the 1983 session of the commission. Practical actions have already been taken for the purpose of testing cooperative measures, including experimental alerts between countries. Practical exercises are intended for May in a cooperative effort between Sweden and Finland in the area of the Aland Sea.

In Hilden's opinion cooperative exercises are a logical continuation after the testing of alert procedures. There are also plans to arrange joint exercises between three countries.

Professor Voipio considers it a positive sign that detrimental substances or PCB- and DDT-contents are decreasing in the Baltic Sea.

On the other hand, the amount of plant nutrients coming from the land to the sea has been on the rise in the last decade. If this trend is not stopped, there is a danger of excessive eutrophication in the Baltic Sea, emphasizes Voipio.

The commission will discuss, among other things, last year's report on activities and the reports of working groups subordinate to the commission. A follow-up report and evaluation of the condition of the Baltic Sea, the internal organization of the commission, the budget for the next fiscal year, the commission's relations with other international organizations, and responsibility for accidents caused by actions contrary to the general agreement concerning the environmental protection of the Baltic Sea are also up for discussion.

The Finnish delegation at the meeting is headed by Section Chief Osmo Lares of the Foreign Ministry. The environmental protection agreement concerning the Baltic Sea went into effect in 1980 after it was ratified by the states bordering the Baltic Sea.

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TASMANIA GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO DAM FRANKLIN; ELECTION LIKELY

Forming of Opposition

Melbourne THE AGE in English 30 Jan 82 pp 1, 4

[Article by Aileen Berry]

[Text]

DEVONPORT. — Tasmania seems likely to go to the polls by July after yesterday's decision by the State Government to dam the Franklin River.

A July election — 12 months before it is due — could mean a serious challenge to the Labor Government by independent candidates on a conservation-backed platform.

After two meetings lasting 3½ hours, the Premier, Mr Holgate, announced the Tasmanian Government's commitment to the planning and construction of a big power-generating plant at a dam on the Gordon River below its junction with the Franklin River.

"We have been advised by experts within the Government and outside it. We have listened to dissenting opinions. We have considered the alternatives suggested," he said.

"I believe our decisions to be right because it is in the public interest."

The former Labor Premier, Mr Lowe — now an Independent on the Parliamentary cross-benches — accused the Government of capitulation "in the face of very real pressure".

He said that after this "act of cowardice" he would not be prepared to allow the Government to continue beyond the end of June. "I will be voting against Supply and I hope the Opposition will, too," he said.

An Australian Democrat, Dr Norm Sanders, said he would



push for a motion of no confidence in Mr Holgate's Government as soon as Parliament resumed on 26 March.

"I want Harry's head on a plate," he said after yesterday's decision. "I expect the Liberals to support me in this motion otherwise I will accuse them of doing a deal with Holgate."

The Liberal Party in Tasmania also supports the Franklin development. While it would want the Labor Government toppled, it would not want it before the Franklin legislation was passed and the "blame" for it was attached to the Holgate administration.

Until then, they are unlikely to support any no-confidence vote against the Premier, who is believed to have told friends he thinks he can "hold out" until June or July.

The director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Dr Bob Brown, said they would now have to depend on Canberra to save the Franklin.

Tasmania needs money or permission to borrow from the Loan Council before the dam, costing about \$1000 million, can be built.

"I think the decision is a hallmark of the fact that with our present bevy of politicians Tasmania is headed for more debts, more unemployment and more environmental degradation," he said.

The society will now open permanent offices in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane "to appeal to the nation as a whole to support us".

The Labor Caucus voted 15-5 to go ahead with the dam. The dissenters were the ALP Whip, Mr Aird, the Deputy Premier, Mr Barnard, the former Minister for National Parks, Mr Lohrey, the Environment Minister, Mr Graham, and the Minister for Employment, Mr Aulich. All five gave an undertaking to Caucus not to speak out publicly on their opposition.

Mr Holgate set no date for the start of the project. He said preliminary work on the dam itself was likely to begin in 1985, but Government sources said roadwork and other support services would have start much sooner.

In his announcement yesterday,

Mr Holgate gave three reasons for the Government's decision to proceed with the scheme.

"The first is that it is essential for the future growth of Tasmania's economy that our power-generating capacity should grow," he said.

"The second is that this scheme, the Gordon below Franklin, is environmentally preferable to any other for of generation and economically the best solution of those available and the third is that the Tasmanian people have very clearly indicated their support for the proposal."

Federal Cabinet may discuss the Tasmanian decision next week. Discussions between the Minister for the Environment, Mr Wilson, and other Ministers are expected on the issue, on which the Government is coming under increasing pressure to step in.

Most of this pressure centres on the possibility of the Federal Government refusing Loan Council agreement to the proposed hydro-electric project. The Federal Government has nominated the south-west for inclusion on the World Heritage list.

The Australian Heritage Commission will visit southern Tasmania during the first week of February, and plans to inspect the south west region from the air.

Impact of Dam

Melbourne THE AGE in English 30 Jan 82 p 4

[Article by Aileen Berry]

[Text]

DEVONPORT. — Australia's best limestone gorges, a rich and diverse temperate rain forest and 40 per cent of Tasmania's huon pine habitat will disappear if the State's controversial Gordon - below - Franklin dam is built.

After nearly five years studying the delicate eco-system of the south-west wilderness, Peter Waterman, a geographer and environmental planner is convinced the Tasmanian Government and the State's Hydro-Electric Commission are making a terrible mistake.

He thinks their explanation that the land surrounding the spectacular Franklin River represents only 1 per cent of the south-west region is ridiculous.

"They will destroy 100 per cent of a pristine temperate rain forest which has taken 25,000 years to evolve," he said yesterday.

As the leader of a \$500,000 survey, Mr Waterman worked with an independent consultancy team of 40 researchers in the region from April 1977.

Their 600-page final report was tabled in Federal Parliament late last year while the last of the 25 discussion papers, 20 occasional papers and 22 working papers were printed this week.

His study is considered the most extensive and detailed resource inventory ever done in Australia. The cost was shared by the State and Federal Governments.

According to Mr Waterman, the Gordon below Franklin dam will destroy the inherent scenic qual-

ity of the heart of the south-west wilderness. Lost forever would be the area's cultural offerings — a series of mostly unexplored caves believed to hold archeological secrets of international significance.

It was confirmed at the Australian National University this week that the Fraser Cave in the Franklin River Valley was occupied by Aborigines during the last Ice Age.

The finds in the cave, which will be flooded in the scheme, predate by 10,000 years the previous oldest finds at Tierra del Fuego, on the tip of South America.

Mr Waterman said the dam in the Middle Gordon Development had already jeopardised the delicate balance of Franklin River's flora and fauna.

Suspected Sabotage Reaction

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 1 Feb 82 p 1

[Article by Paul Tapp]

[Text]

THE Franklin River controversy deepened at the weekend when the modern multi-storey offices of Tasmania's Hydro Electric Commission in Hobart were flooded in what may be the start of a sabotage campaign against the energy authority.

Damage estimated at \$500,000 was caused when internal fire hoses on the building's 12 floors were turned on by vandals less than 12 hours after the Tasmanian Government decided to flood the Franklin River in the State's next major power development.

While strict security arrangements were being made for the building and the State's network of power stations, the Tasmanian conservation movement dissociated itself from the incident.

Police are convinced the incident was well planned and not one of spontaneity at the Government's decision.

Although it is the most serious attack it is not the first time that HEC property has been the subject of reprisal-based acts of vandalism.

In the past few years there have been a series of attacks on equipment and HEC camps in areas considered too remote and troublesome for "ordina-

ry" vandals.

Although authorities will not publicly admit their fears there is a consensus that further attacks on HEC property might follow the decision to flood the Franklin.

Meanwhile, the Tasmania Wilderness Society will open an office in Canberra this month in a bid to widen its campaign against the dam.

The national liaison officer of the society, Mr Chris Harris, said the decision was taken to emphasise a new and stronger phase of political lobbying.

Federal ALP members of Parliament would be encouraged to further condemn the Tasmanian Labor Government, and there would also be a concerted effort to dissuade the Federal Government from giving financial support to the scheme.

Last Friday a meeting of the Tasmanian Caucus voted 15-5 in favor of damming the Franklin River in about three years.

"Nineteen eighty-five is a long time off - and the fight to save the Franklin has not ended by a long way," Mr Harris said.

"It's only just begun."

Noted conservationist Harry Butler is believed to have been appointed by the Tasmanian Government as an ecological adviser on the development on the Franklin.

Editorial Criticism

Melbourne THE AGE in English 1 Feb 82 p 13

[Text]

AFTER two meetings lasting more than three hours, the Tasmanian Government decided last Friday to go ahead and dam the Lower Gordon and Franklin rivers. According to the Premier, Mr Holgate, the Government decided on the Franklin scheme for three reasons. It was essential for the future growth of Tasmania's economy; it was environmentally preferable and economically sounder than other systems of hydro-electric generation; and the

Tasmanian people had "very clearly indicated" their support for the proposal. On all three grounds Mr Holgate's reasoning is as suspect as his "facts".

To take the third of his reasons first. It is true that in the recent referendum the Franklin River scheme was the most popular choice. But the 47 per cent who voted for it in preference to the Olga option can hardly be called a popular mandate, particularly when 45 per cent of those who voted did so informally, with most of them writing "no dams" on their ballot paper. Mr Holgate gave the voters only two choices. The referendum suggested that for nearly half the electorate, the range of options was inadequate, and that for every voter who favored the Franklin scheme in a straight-out contest with the Olga, there was slightly more than one opposed to it.

It is also debatable whether the Franklin scheme is, as Mr Holgate claims, economically sounder than other schemes and environmentally preferable to them. The Hydro-Electric Commission thinks so, of course; but the HEC is obsessed with its own brand of power. It was a commission report, following an investigation of the Franklin scheme in 1979, that persuaded Mr Holgate. But, as many readers of that report have pointed out, it was biased in favor of flooding the rivers from the start. It brushed aside environmental considerations and gave cursory treatment to most of the potential

alternatives. Furthermore, since the HEC first began pressing for the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme, the discovery of coal in Tasmania and soaring interest rates have enhanced the comparative advantages of coal-fired power stations, among other energy-saving or energy-producing alternatives.

This being so, the Tasmanian Government would have been well advised to hold off while it appointed an independent inquiry into the State's energy needs and resources. Politically it would have been wise; electorally it would have proved popular. As it is, Mr Holgate has put himself offside with many of his own party supporters; with those who argue that the wild rivers of South-West Tasmania are the property of all Australians and not just the despoilers in the HEC; and with the Federal Labor Party which is looking to build up its support before the next Federal election. Mr Holgate says he and his minority Government can hold out until June or July. Even if he does, and it is by no means certain, there is no guarantee that the Federal Government will give him the money he needs to flood the Franklin, particularly when it has newly nominated the entire south-west of Tasmania, including the Lower Gordon and Franklin, for inclusion in the World Heritage List. It might be tempted, on the contrary, to step in and demand an independent inquiry into Tasmania's energy needs first.

WORLD HERITAGE BID FOR SOUTHWEST TASMANIA CONTROVERSIAL

Melbourne THE AGE in English 25 Jan 82 p 3

[Article by Ken Haley]

[Text]

CANBERRA. — The Federal Government has nominated much of south-west Tasmania for inclusion in the World Heritage List, an international register of irreplaceable areas.

This announcement, made yesterday by the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, Mr Wilson, brings closer the prospect of confrontation between the Fraser Government and the Tasmanian Labor Government over plans by the latter to dam some of the Gordon-Franklin River system.

Mr Wilson said that the western Tasmania wilderness national parks, covering 769,355 hectares, were one of the last remaining temperate wilderness areas in the world.

He said the parks and the Lord Howe Island group, which was also nominated for inclusion in the list yesterday, were areas "of outstanding and universal natural significance."

The region of Tasmania submitted by the Government contains the South-West National Park, the Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park.

Mr Wilson said the area had a wide and outstanding range of geological, landform and vegetation characteristics.

Nomination for the World Heritage List comes less than a week before the Tasmanian Government

meets to decide between two proposals by the Hydro-Electricity Commission.

One scheme would flood the Gordon River beyond the Franklin, the other would flood part of the Franklin. At a referendum in December 38 per cent of Tasmania's registered voters informally indicated a desire for neither dam to be built.

Because the ballot did not include a "no dams" option their dissent was described as the biggest informal vote recorded in a Western democracy.

The Tasmanian Premier, Mr Holgate, said in Hobart last night that he would refer the World Heritage List nomination to his Cabinet meeting tomorrow. Cabinet will reconvene on Friday to decide between the dam proposals. Mr Holgate has already ruled out a decision not to build one at all.

Yesterday's nomination coincided with an attack on Mr Holgate by his Federal Labor colleague, Mr West, who is the Opposition spokesman on environment and conservation.

Public opinion in Australia would be overwhelmingly against any announcement by the Tasmanian Government to legislate for the Gordon-below-Franklin dam, Mr West said.

Mr Holgate told 'The Age' that his Government had a commendable record of environmental concern. "I closed down a quarry in the Freycinet National Park last year," he said.

RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION FOUND AT NSW COASTAL RESORT

Sources in Sand Mining

Canberra THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN in English 16-17 Jan 82 p 3

[Text]

THE Queensland Government has decided to check former sand mining sites for radioactivity after the disclosure of high radiation readings at Byron Bay.

Sandmining has been carried out at several sites on the Gold Coast and a big operation is under way at North Stradbroke Island.

The Minister for Health, Mr Austin, said he would issue advice only if the tests proved positive.

Queensland Fears

Canberra THE AUSTRALIAN in English 12 Jan 82 p 2

[Article by Colin Mackay and Steve Harvey]

[Text]

THE NSW Minister for Health, Mr Brereton, yesterday ordered the shifting of a portable classroom in the Byron Bay Primary School grounds after confirmation of radioactive contamination in the NSW north coast resort town.

Mr Brereton also ordered that radioactive waste from sand mining be cleared from two areas near the centre of the town.

The minister's order coincided with the disclosure that houses near a big sand mining operation in Western Australia have been built on land

with radioactivity levels above acceptable National Health and Medical Research Council standards.

Mr Brereton said his action had followed confirmation of radioactivity in Byron Bay, found in tests carried out by the associate professor of physics at Sydney University, Dr Murray Winn, in association with *The Australian*.

WASTE DUMP

NSW Health Commission physicists who travelled to Byron Bay this week to carry out radiation tests had confirmed Dr Winn's findings, Mr Brereton said.

The NSW Health Commis-

sion team was sent to Byron Bay after a special investigation by *The Australian* on radioactivity in the town was published last Saturday.

Dr Winn, one of Australia's leading experts on cosmic rays, carried out the tests in Byron Bay after first testing soil samples provided by *The Australian*. The samples contained the mineral monazite, which contains the radioactive element thorium.

Dr Winn's tests revealed high radiation readings at several locations, including the site on which the portable classroom stands, on a hectare of land zoned for residential sub-division near the town's main beach and near a new

shopping complex being built by Woolworths.

Tests by commission physicists inside the portable classroom had revealed a radiation reading of 0.1 millirems an hour, compared with a minimum safety level of 0.01 millirems an hour, Mr Brereton said.

Vacant land at the rear of the Woolworths complex, near the Byron Bay railway station, had produced radiation levels between 0.1 millirems and 0.6 millirems an hour.

The hectare of land proposed for residential development near the main beach had also produced high radiation readings comparable with those taken by Dr Winn, Mr Brereton said.

An operation to remove contaminated soil from the site near the Woolworths complex began yesterday and will continue today.

"All radioactive waste will be taken to a dump 10km from Byron Bay and covered with a metre of soil to shield any radiation," Mr Brereton said.

The contaminated land in Western Australia is in the small south coast town of Capel, about 200km from Perth. It was once used as a dumping ground by sand miners operating in the area.

Three companies now mine around Capel, but so far there has been no suggestion of which, if any, might be involved in the contamination.

The problem was revealed by the West Australian X-Ray Laboratory, which has been carrying out a survey of background radiation levels in the area.

The study is continuing and full results are not expected to be released until early next month.

However, inquiries yesterday indicated at least two houses in the small town had been built on land with high rad-

ioactivity levels. The number is expected to go higher before the study is completed.

ELEVATED

It appears the houses have been built on sites filled with tailings, containing monazite, from the sand-mining operations.

The West Australian Minister for Health, Mr Young, yesterday confirmed there had been some use of mineral sands tailings as land fill and that there were some elevated background radiation levels in the town.

The Capel Shire Clerk, Mr Trevor Bradshaw, said yesterday that at this stage it looked as if the problem was not widespread.

Mr Young said some increased radiation levels had been expected and the State Radiological Council would decide what action was needed after it received the results from the study.

The chief physicist for the X-Ray Laboratory, Mr Barry King, said yesterday possible courses of action were difficult to predict.

"We are not talking about levels of radiation that could be classified as highly dangerous and warrant immediate action," Mr King said.

"What we have is an amount of radioactivity that might add a little to the natural incidence of some types of disease over a long period."

Mr Ken Court, the chairman of Westralian Sands Ltd, the biggest sand miner in the Capel area, said yesterday it would be premature to speculate on what action his company would take as a result of the study.

The general manager of Associated Minerals Consolidated, Mr John McKellar, said yesterday his company would act to remedy the situation if it were involved.

Construction Ban

Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 19 Jan 82 p 2

[Article by Jill Margo]

[Text]

An area of Byron Bay has been declared unfit for housing following the discovery of high levels of radiation.

The director of public health, Dr Allan Crawford, said yesterday the area was a construction site with about seven plots.

Action would have to be taken

before people lived there.

Physicists from the radiation branch of the NSW Health Commission found radiation levels of 0.12 millirems an hour in the area. The internationally accepted safe maximum is 0.1 millirems.

The radiation comes from concentrations of the mineral monazite, containing radioactive thorium, which was in waste dumped at Byron Bay by sand-mining companies.

Dr Crawford said the radioactive soil could either be taken away or more soil could be laid on top.

Removing it would be a better solution in the long term, but it was up to the local council and the owners of the land to decide what to do.

He said the affected area was between Patterson Street, Patterson Lane and Massinger Street and about 50 householders in the surrounding area had asked the commission to check their properties.

Some of these people may have used tailings from the sand mining as filling in their gardens and may have one or two "hot spots".

The commission's officers would check the houses, but Dr Crawford believed most had no need to worry.

Officers had located a narrow strip of ground along a railway track that had levels ranging from 0.2 to 0.6 millirems an hour.

It was unlikely that anyone would use this strip and for that reason the commission had not recommended that the sand be removed or covered.

A Woolworths construction site near this strip had been found to have unacceptable levels of radiation. By yesterday, it had been completely dug up. The inside of the building had been checked and was safe.

CSO: 5000/7518

BRIEFS

POLL ON REEF DRILLING--Opposition to drilling for oil on or near the Great Barrier Reef has increased markedly in the past 2-1/2 years, the latest Herald Survey shows. In April, 1979, a nationwide poll of voters showed that 66 per cent of Australians were opposed to drilling for oil on or near the reef, while 31 per cent thought oil exploration should be permitted even if there was some danger to the reef. The new survey, conducted last month, shows that 80 per cent of Australians are now opposed to drilling on or near the reef, while only 18 per cent favour exploration even if it endangers the reef. Oil drilling is now unpopular with a clear majority of people from all age, occupation, educational and voting groups, and from all States. As previously, Liberal voters are more favourably disposed to oil exploration than either Labor or Australian Democrat voters. Even so, 76 per cent of Liberal voters say there should be no drilling on or near the reef--a view shared by 84 per cent of Labor voters and 87 per cent of Democrat voters. [Excerpt] [Sydney THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in English 11 Jan 82 p 5]

CSO: 5000/7518

STUDY REVEALS POLLUTION TURNING GANGES INTO 'RIVER OF POISON'

Bangkok POST in English 21 Feb 82 p 5

[Article by Sumanta Banergee]

[Text]

A RIVER of poison is threatening India from the north to the east. The river is the holy Ganga, and the poison is pollution.

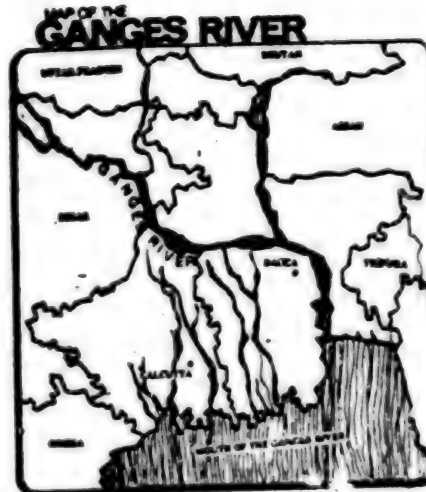
A wide and fertile alluvial basin is fed by the river, more popularly known as the Ganges, which since the hoary past had been worshipped by Hindus. It was on its banks that blossomed not only important trade centres but also ancient pilgrimages.

It is one such pilgrimage that has become a source of Ganga's poisoning. The pilgrimage is made to the holy city of Varanasi. Hindus from all over India not only come here to worship in the numerous temples, but also to cremate their dead on its banks — considered the height of piety. It is a tradition hundreds of years old.

Now, it has been found that every year, 200 to 300 tons of ash and 140 to 200 tons of flesh from half-burnt corpses find their way into the river.

The macabre findings were revealed recently by Dr B.D. Tripathi of the Banaras Hindu University of Varanasi. The study was co-sponsored by the Government's Department of Science and Technology.

The river Ganga, which originates in the Himalayas, reaches Varanasi in the northern part of the heartland of India, and then moves towards the east where it is joined on the way by several rivers from the south to flow into the Bay of Bengal.



In Varanasi, the Hindus consign the dead bodies of flames in a cremation ground called the MANIKARNIKA where funeral pyres are burning all through the years on the banks of the Ganga. Forty per cent of the bodies are brought from outside Varanasi. Some among them belong to the affluent in distant places, who can even afford to hire planes to transport the bodies of their dead relatives to Varanasi.

Hindus wash away their sins— but risk infection — in the Ganges, India's holy river which is becoming more polluted each year.

The study found that the cremation on the banks of the Ganga at Varanasi alone consumes as much energy released by the sun every year in an area of 30,000 square metres. About 11,000 tons of firewood are used for the incineration every year. This means that around 115 hectares of forest are being stripped for the required wood.

Although the Government's national forest policy resolution of 1952 recommended that the country should aim at a coverage of one-third of the total land area under forests, today only a little over one-fifth of the total land area is under forests. And not more than 40 to 50 per cent of this has good forest cover. The remaining areas are fast being depleted when they are diverted for agricultural use, mining, irrigation, industries and, as revealed now, for cremation.

As a result of such diversions, about 4.2 million hectares of forest land were lost during the two decades spanning the 1950s and 1970s.

Apart from the cremations, the Ganga also receives carcasses of various animals dumped into the river. The Banaras Hindu University study reveals that 8,000 carcasses of animals find their way every year into the river. One can well imagine the effects of such dumping on the health of the people who use the water all along the banks of the Ganga. Since its water is considered holy, many orthodox Hindus drink it in its pure form, without even boiling or sterilising it.

But besides the traditional religious sources, there are modern industrial establishments which are also poisoning the Ganga. What were described by the late Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as "modern temples" — the factories — are also responsible for polluting the rivers.

According to the study, nearly 1,500 industries are situated along the Ganga River from the north to the east. These industries release their untreated effluents into the river.

The study reveals that the Ganga water contains high turbidity owing to suspended particles, high biological oxygen demand, chemical oxygen demand and low dissolved oxygen content — all indicative of pollution. Traces of metals such as chromium, lead, cadmium, copper, iron and zinc were also

found. A high incidence of bacteria and other sources of diseases were also noticed in the samples of the Ganga water examined by the study team.

The irony of it all is that those who are responsible for its pollution — the orthodox Hindu pilgrims and the modern industrialists — swear by religion and yet forget or choose to ignore both the religious and the historical tradition of this ancient river.

According to the Hindu scriptures, in the ancient days during a terrible drought, a pious king, Bhagiratha, through a fierce penance, pleased the gods and compelled them to release the celestial river Ganga from the heavens to descend to the earth. Thus, in the way Indian Hindus release half-burnt bodies and animal carcasses into the river, they show scant respect for the religious sanctity of the Ganga.

The entire agricultural prosperity of the Ganges basin leading to the development of commercial and industrial centres on the river banks, should have led the modern industrialists to show some consideration for the river.

But apparently the Ganga is regarded as the goose that once laid the golden eggs — and now to be used as an outlet for effluents.

Recognising the need for the prevention and control of water pollution, the Indian Government enacted the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act in 1974. There is a Central Board for the prevention and control of water pollution under the Act. But no one in India knows whether the Government has prosecuted any industrialist for violating the Act.

In reply to a question seeking information about prosecutions against those violating the Act and similar other legislations, Minister for Environment Chandra Pratap Narain Singh told the Indian Parliament on April 1, 1981: To collect information regarding legal measures under the Act would be a "tremendous time-consuming task because of the very large coverage of geographical and administrative jurisdictions."

Yet, voluntary and non-government organisations had brought to the Government's attention instances of violations of the environmental legislation by the industrialists.

In the West Indian state of Maharashtra, a paper mill owned by the Birlas is alleged to be dumping effluents into a nearby river and polluting its water. The industrial house is reported to have granted financial aid to a research institute to work on environmental protection.

Some years ago, in the South Indian state of Kerala, it was found that a textile mill — also owned by the Birlas — was polluting a river with industrial and chemical wastes. The Kerala State Board for Prevention and Control of Water Pollution recommended prosecution of the mill's management, but there has been no state government action so far.

Because of these official lapses, environmentalists are sceptical about the pledges to save the environment made periodically at international and national conferences by ministers and government officials. Ignorance among the people about the dangers of pollution and indifference among the administrators and industrialists to palpable damage to the environment combine to poison not only the Ganga but hundreds of other rivers and streams that crisscross India. —
DEPTHNEWS

CSO: 5000/5696

STATES URGED TO IMPROVE HEALTH OF SOIL

Madras THE HINDU in English 12 Feb 82 p 8

[Editorial: "Health of the Soil"]

[Text] THE AVERAGE YIELD of wheat and rice in India's irrigated areas is 1,694 kg and 2,069 kg per hectare as against 5,000 kg of wheat in the Netherlands and 6,000 kg of rice in Japan. According to expert computations, irrigation has not produced more than 0.4 — 0.6 tonne of additional foodgrain per hectare when, with the existing techniques, the yields should be much higher. While the world is losing its rich top soil at a fast rate, India may be doing worse for lack of adequate protective measures. The Union Agriculture Ministry estimates the problem tracts constitute 53 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. Special difficulties are posed by gullies and ravines, alkalinity and salinity, shifting cultivation, riverine lands, torrents, desert, coastal sands and the very familiar phenomenon of waterlogging. Awareness of these has not been matched by follow up action. Only 13.4 per cent of the total problem area has been treated by the diverse soil conservation measures which have so far been implemented. The more serious part of the challenge relates to dry farming areas where soil erosion is on the increase because of unimpounded monsoon runoffs or the impact of dry winds. The Union Agriculture Ministry has delineated the country into 10 soil conservation regions on the basis of the agronomic peculiarities of each region. The success of the action programme being mounted to control soil erosion and improve soil management depends on what the States are able and willing to do towards the targets set for them in respect of contour bunding, bench terracing, nullah plugging and water harvesting which form part of the overall anti-erosion strategy.

Organisationally speaking, the arrange-

ments are perfect. Many States and Union Territories have established their own Land Use Boards as desired by the Centre which, for its part, is maintaining at Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore and Nagpur its own Regional Centres supported by three Sub-Centres at Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Ranchi. Soil problems relating to river basins are being enquired into through special surveys. It is reported that 171 soil survey reports have been issued to the concerned departments in the States. An experimental programme on remote sensing in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation is functioning in two selected project areas. It is incumbent on the States to ensure supportive action. One particular segment of land which calls for immediate attention is the black soil tract of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. These soils are poor in fertility, moisture movement and organic matter. Recent studies have established that cotton is less efficient than safflower in utilising moisture and that advancing the sowing of jowar to October to be coincident with the rains showed promise of richer yields. Two more points stressed by the soil scientists are that pesticides can poison land due to their interaction with the substances present in the land and that soil degradation is largely the result of wanton mismanagement. The first which Mr. Jean-Marc Bollag, a microbiologist at the Pennsylvania State University has endorsed, needs to be looked into by the agricultural scientists in order to formulate remedial measures. The second point is what the World Soil Science Congress currently in session in New Delhi has chosen to emphasise. How these notes of caution are acted upon by those concerned — the States and the ryots themselves — will decide the degree of success the economy can achieve in this vulnerable field.

BANNED PESTICIDES STILL WIDELY USED IN MALAYSIA

Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 8 Feb 82 p 5

[Article by Paul Icamina]

[Text]

GEORGETOWN (Malaysia): Agent Orange has come a long way, from the jungles of Vietnam to the paddy fields of Malaysia.

Agent Orange is a chemical defoliant, a mixture of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D and large amounts of dioxin used to clear jungle cover during the Vietnam war. U.S. soldiers exposed to the chemical subsequently fathered deformed babies years after they got home. Vietnamese researchers have also documented stunted trees, deformed babies and miscarriages.

The chemical 2,4,5-T is marketed by five companies as a herbicide and tree killer in Malaysia. The other chemical, 2,4-D, is used as herbicide only. Both chemicals are usually contaminated with Dioxin.

For instance, 2,4,5-T contains dioxin which is claimed to be the most toxic synthetic substance in the world. It can cause skin eruptions, liver abnormalities, nerve disorders, change in respiratory and immune systems, impotence cancer. Its use is restricted or banned in West Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States.

The World Health Organisation estimates that from 5,000 to 50,000 people die of acute pesticide poisoning each year, either from eating contaminated food or through occupational exposure. In Malaysia, there were at least 68 cases of pesticide poisoning in 1972, increasing to 71 by 1975. Within a one-week period in mid-1979, more than 30 farmers were hospitalised in Alor Star for suspected pesticide poisoning. One of them died.

In a study released late 1981 by the Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM, or Friends of the Earth), four out of 10 farmers from 83 farms in Penang Island and Wellesley province complained they became ill after using pesticide. They said drowsiness, headaches, skin irritations, breathing difficulties and vomiting invariably followed after using the chemicals.

The SAM survey found that at least 14 pesticide chemicals - including DDT, Chlordane, Aldrin, Dieldrin, BHC, 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T - are widely used in Malaysia but are restricted or banned in other countries.

On average, a Malaysian vegetable farmer spends around 200 ringgit (\$86) on pesticides every year for a half acre of vegetable garden. In 1978, Malaysia spent about 213 ringgit (\$91) on pesticides, since then progressively increasing at the rate of 15-25 per cent annually. Farmers, on the average, work with pesticides every four or five days.

In a 1980 study made by Wong Kien Keong, acting dean of the department of environmental sciences, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, the levels of pesticide elements found in the blood serum of the general Malaysian population are much higher than that of the U.S. general population.

Says Dr. Lim Teck Ghee, a professor at the Universiti Sains here and SAM vice-president: "Pesticides are another product that have been heavily promoted in the Third World to increase agricultural productivity. Our experience in Malaysia with it is a grim warning to other countries of the problems and dangers of pesticides use."

"The outcome of our research shows that the present patterns of pesticides use - largely unrestricted and indiscriminate - need to be stopped immediately".

The disturbing fact is that while pesticides use is increasing at a rapid rate, public awareness of the problem has not kept pace. Provision for the regulation of import, manufacture and sales of pesticides exists under the Pesticides Act 1974 which, to date, has not been strictly enforced. Chemical pesticides are thus easily bought from shops and even sundry stalls.

Insecticides are by far the most widely used, with every commercial farm using them. Herbicides, which act as weed killers in oil palm and rubber estates, come next. Both pesticides are mostly used as preventive measures, applied regularly even though no pest attack may have occurred.

At least 72 per cent of farmers surveyed by SAM depend on shopkeepers to recommend the type of pesticide and its use. More often than not, retailers are ignorant of the potential dangers of pesticides while very few farmers ever are ignorant of the potential dangers of pesticides while very few farmers ever receive advice from agricultural officials or salesmen from pesticide companies. Consequently, farmers use more pesticides than they should, believing that more pesticides used means more pests are killed.

But the pests seem to be winning. At least 8 out of 10 farmers surveyed by SAM said they changed pesticides brands every two to three years, 91.6 per cent going over to "a more effective" brand. And 84.3 per cent said the pest situation has grown worse. In fact, chemical pesticide spraying failed to stop the brown hopper from invading Tanjung Karang in 1977 and causing M\$2 million (\$900,000) damage in another area in 1979.

Agriculture Department officials subsequently agreed to use less insecticides in Kedah so as not to haphazardly kill the hoppers' natural enemies at the same time.

The most obvious effect of pesticides, of course, is on human health. "Malaysian farmers, being largely uninformed, do not really understand the toxicity of chemical pesticides", SAM secretary N. Rajean told this correspondent.

"For instance, it is common to see estate workers recycling pesticide containers for storing water. Empty pesticide containers are given to children as toys, while a 25-litre drum may become a convenient container to serve drinks during feasts".

In a SAM survey, 71 per cent of farmers said they did not heed the warnings on pesticides containers even when most of them realised some kind of danger existed. Nineteen per cent did not even know that pesticides are dangerous. This is especially true to most farmers who are illiterate and are unable to read the labels of containers.

Malaysian farmers usually spray pesticides using a backpack type of equipment, clad only in singlets or T-shirts, shorts and slippers - little, if any, protection. When powered sprayers and fogging machines are used, the only protection against inhalation of toxic fumes is usually just a handkerchief or towel to cover the mouth.

A survey of some estates revealed that not a single one of them took precautions for safety, masks and gloves not given to workers. Even more shocking is the fact that workers sometimes use their bare hands to stir and mix the chemicals.

Two cases of food contamination by pesticides have been reported. One occurred when barley contaminated with parathion was mistakenly eaten, resulting in death for nine out of 38 people involved. Another happened in 1974 when endosulfan contamination of flour ended in severe poisoning of a large number of people in Sarawak.

Pesticides and their residues that remain on foodstuffs are a constant threat upon reaching the market. For instance, about 94 per cent of farmers use chemical pesticides up to nine days before or even nearer to harvest, with hardly enough time for pesticides to be washed off. More alarming is a very common practice of farmers to apply chemical pesticides to "ladies fingers" just one or two days before harvest.

So much so that local vegetable farmer, Ching Chong Pee, has a word on detecting pesticides in vegetables by using the taste bud. "If they taste bitter throw them away as this means the presence of pesticides", he says.

-Dephnews

ARTICLE REPORTS ON NEPAL'S SHRINKING FORESTS

New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English 28 Feb 82 pp 86-87

[Article by Ashok R. Pandey and Kunda Dixit]

[Text]

*Hear me, ye trees that surround our
hermitage!*

*Sakountala, ne'er moistened in the stream
Her own parched lips, till she had fondly
poured*

Its purest water on your thirsty roots.

—from *Sakountala* by Kalidasa

Last month, the Nepalese Government appointed a high level watch-dog committee to tighten restrictions on the commercial exploitation of trees. Another recent government legislation has also banned the felling and export of sawn wood and *gola* to India, Nepal's primary trading partner. Taken together, it would appear that Nepal is seriously involved in a conservation crusade. But the truth is tragically different.

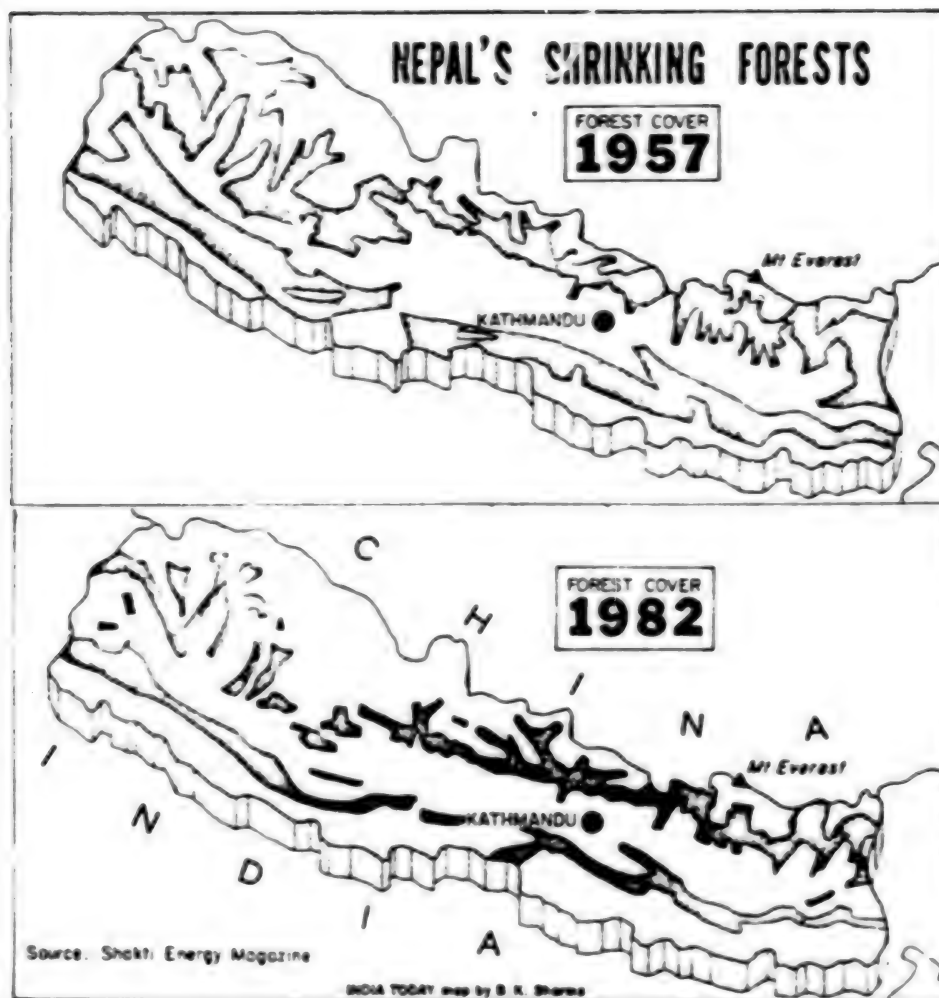
Nepal currently faces a grim battle in its efforts to regenerate the lush forests that once carpeted its hillslopes and have in the last three decades virtually disappeared. Twenty years ago, 57 per cent of Nepal's 64,000 sq mile land area had forest cover (see map). Today that figure—even by optimistic estimates—has been reduced to 23 per cent. More than half of Nepal's sub-Himalayan jungles have vanished since 1955 and according to conservation experts, the remaining accessible woodlands will cease to exist by the end of this century. "We are already at a point of no return, and all our efforts today are only geared to put off the crisis by a few years," admits a government official in Kathmandu.

Harbinger: Indeed, Nepal's vanishing forests, on which a majority of the rural population (90 per cent) depends for fuel, are

only harbingers of a major catastrophe. "A rise in population, the falling productivity of land, and the scarcity of fuel wood means that not only will most Nepalis not have enough food to eat, but they will not even have the firewood to cook it with," explains Jit Khadga, a development consultant.

Early signs of a fuel famine are already apparent in certain pockets in the mid-hills where farmers make-do with only one cooked meal a day. Most villagers along the entire hill-belt are already caught in a vicious cycle. Firewood that could be collected within an hour 20 years ago now takes a whole day as villagers have to trek higher to reach the fast receding forests. Actual afforestation has not exceeded 2 per cent of the area of deforestation, giving rise to "the disaster gap between the infinitely slow vegetative process of afforestation and the rapid mechanical sweep of deforestation". Clearly, at the current levels of firewood consumption—1.5 tonnes a year per family—there will be no trees left by the end of the century.

Denudation has inevitably led to another equally alarming phenomenon: soil erosion. Without trees to hold it together, the top soil on steep slopes is easily washed off to be carried as far away as the Bay of Bengal by the many rivers that originate in the Himalaya. Every year, especially during the monsoon season, the Nepalese hillsides reverberate to familiar cries of "paaro aye" (landslides). From the air, the mid hills of eastern Nepal look as if they have been mauled by a giant cat. Increased run-off and siltation of Himalayan rivers raise the level of river-beds by about 15-30 cm annually. Floods in the Nepal Terai and the adjoining lowlands of the neighbouring states of Bihar



and Uttar Pradesh have become more frequent and devastating with each passing year and are likely to get worse unless erosion in the Himalayan slopes is checked. "We can also expect a lot of new Moore Islands," quipped a Nepal-based UN expert.

Government Policy: What surprises most conservationists in Nepal is the Janus-headed policy of the Government. While government officials piously espouse the cause of afforestation, its Forestry Department is busy doling out tracts of virgin forest to contractors. In fact, timber exports to India account for 25 per cent of the country's exports. "In 15 years, the Terai will have no commercial forests left," says Dhruva Prasad, a district forest officer at a government-run nursery in east Nepal. The local press was bristling with indignation last month, at the felling licence allegedly granted to an Indian contractor to clear large tracts of *shisua* trees in west Nepal where Indian contractors have long been active in clearing forests.

The Government's efforts at conservation of forests to date have hardly been commensurate with the epic dimensions of the problem Nepal faces. "Demand for firewood exceeded supply 20 years ago," says an energy expert. "to meet present needs, we need to plant 3.4 million hectares of new forests." The current plan period, however envisages only 35,000 hectares of new plantations—and these trees will take at least 15 years to reach their prime, if they survive. The only silver lining in Nepal's eco-crisis is the success of the "community forests" scheme introduced by the Government in several districts. The scheme was devised to revive the age-old traditional ties between villagers and their forest which had been severed after the nationalisation of all forest land 25 years ago.

Dividing Line: Nepal's afforestation programmes are also inextricably linked with its efforts to harness the enormous hydro-electric potential. The country is sitting on a pot of gold with an estimated

hydro-electric generation potential of 25,000 megawatts—the highest per capita in the world. Reservoirs on some of the major Himalayan rivers can generate electricity for the chronically power-starved industrial belt in north India, store monsoon waters to check floods and augment the lean season flow for irrigation schemes. The only catch is that the life expectancy of these costly dams would be reduced by half under the present

rates of siltation in the treeless catchment areas behind the dams.

For the Nepalese farmer, the line dividing economic prosperity and ecological disaster is very thin indeed. "Time is fast running out. A lackadaisical approach to forest conservation will just not help. The problem must be tackled on a war footing," says Hikmat Rai, a conservationist. Indeed, said Hans C. Reiger, a renowned environmentalist: "There is only one Himalaya to lose."

CSO: 5000/5699

NEED FOR NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION FOR PAKISTAN OUTLINED

Peshawar KHYBER MAIL in English 3 Mar 82 p 4

[Article by Ghulam Hussain and Qamar Baloch]

[Text]

It has been universally recognized to deal with the threat of environmental degradation for which some of the Asian countries have taken legislative action. Recently, the Indian Government has set up a full-fledged Department of Environment under the Prime Minister and enactment of a national legislation is under final stages in Nepal. Peoples Republic of China promulgated the Environment Protection Law in 1979 which, inter-alia, established an Environmental Protection Office. South Korea also promulgated Environment Preservation Law in 1977. The law established "Office of Environment".

Protecting the environment is not simply a Western fad, or a luxury we can do without. Deteriorating environmental conditions have a definite economic aspect and many of these conditions are increasingly evident in Pakistan. Health, for instance, is affected not only by water which has been contaminated by industrial waste, but also by

the high level of atmospheric pollution in cities and around industrial areas. Similarly, the setting of industrial projects, especially those which create heavy pollution either in the form of smoke or wastes discharged into rivers needs to be examined. Some industrial wastes which are discharged untreated into the air or in waters contain toxic substances because at present there is no law to prevent it. There are numerous other ways in which environmental problems affect the country's economy. Such two common examples are as: The impact of pollution on commercial fishing and the costs of rapidly diminishing woodlands.

The state of environment was deteriorating due to rapid industrialisation and urbanization in the country. Studies carried out by the Environment and Urban Affairs Division indicate: i) 32.6 per cent of food stuff samples were contaminated with bacterial pathogens which was a potential health hazard; ii) drinking water

samples collected from different places in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Attock showed that 16 per cent were contaminated with fecal coliform organisms. Chemical analysis of the same samples indicated that 56.6 per cent were injurious to health due to the presence of various chemicals; iii) the instance of water borne diseases, such as, cholera and typhoid has been on the increase due to non-disposal of human excreta. 30 per cent of all diseases are water borne and 40 per cent of all deaths are due to water borne diseases. Most cities and rural areas of the country including the city of Lahore do not have any sewerage treatment system and the existing garbage collection systems are grossly inadequate; iv) the indiscriminate use of fertilizers have made many crops susceptible to insects requiring increased use of pesticides. According to one estimate, the loss of food crop due to pests amounts to as much as Rs. 2.8 billion per annum. Besides, a substantial part of the agricultural chemicals (fertilizers and pesticides) drain into soil and shallow wells and become potential source of hazard to human health; v) the un-hygienic condition under which livestock and poultry is raised in the country account for an estimated loss of 16 million heads of livestock and poultry valued at Rs. 2.5 million every year. The resulting loss from low yield of milk is estimated at Rs. 115 million per annum; vi) deforestation to the extent of 39 per cent has taken place

in the recent past in the catchment area of Indus River due to indiscriminate cutting; vii) wind and water erosion has brought substantial areas out of cultivation. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of the cultivated area of Rawalpindi Division is affected by erosion and over 8 million acres have been totally lost in Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Lahore and Multan Divisions due to gully formation. Soil erosion is threatening a drastic reduction in the life-spans of dams in the country; viii) studies indicate that Karachi coast-line is receiving more than 100 tons of BOD daily from the domestic and industrial wastes — a rate well above the permissible limit. This poses a serious hazard to the marine life; ix) discharge of sulphur, carbon mono-oxide, lead and nitrogen oxide in the urban atmosphere from the motor vehicles and industrial emissions is well above the permissible levels. The increased instances of asthma, chronic bronchitis and other heart and lung diseases have now been established to be linked with the particulates of sulphates and other pollutants. It will not be out of place to point out in this regard that a recent report in the local Press brought out that of about 3,000 babies borne in Cubatao near Sao Paulo in Brazil, 12 were borne dead with the brains missing; a rare deformity known as anencephaly. The cause of this unfortunate and serious occurrence has been linked with high level of air pollution caused by industries emitting deadly fumes

and toxic gases in the city; and x) about 25-30 per cent of nation's urban population lives under "slum conditions" — manifestation of visible human suffering.

To take stock of the situation further, two international seminars one, on "Environment and Urban Development" from 8 to 10 September, 1981 and the other, on "Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade" on 16th November, 1982 were inaugurated in Islamabad by the President respectively. The President appreciated the efforts of the Environment and Urban Affairs Division in this regard and accepted in principle the need for an Environmental Protection Ordinance.

To determine correct strategies and make the task of fulfilling our obligation to the nation in providing a decent living and a working environment to all citizens easily, as well as, in view of the continuing serious environment deteriorating in the country and under the President's directives, the Environment and Urban Affairs Division has prepared a draft legislation with the assistance of a UN expert.

The draft was circulated for views of the Federal Ministries and Division concerned and the Provincial

Governments. On receipt of the views from the above agencies, the draft was again modified and views of the Punjab and the Sind Governments and the Federal Ministries in respect of role of the Agency have been accommodated in it.

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

The draft legislation proposes to establish a Pakistan Environment Protection Council with the President as its Chairman and Minister Incharge of the Environment subject as its Vice Chairman. The Provinces would be represented in the Council by their respective Ministers Incharge of the subject. The Council provides for cooperation of more members and it envisages that the Ministers for Health, Industries, Production and Planning would also be represented on the Council. The Council will be responsible for the preparation and enforcement of environment policy and environment quality standard.

It is proposed that on promulgation of the Ordinance, its implementation will be taken up in phases with the establishment of the Council to start with.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY

The draft ordinance stipulates creation of Pakistan Environment Protection

Agency at the Federal Level on the pattern of the Asian Agencies on the subject mentioned in the opening paragraph above.

The Agency will be secretariat and executive arm of the Council. The Agency, inter-alia, will coordinate the implementation of National Environment Policies, assist Provincial Government and other agencies in matters concerning environment, initiating the requests for assistance and undertaking necessary research and training programmes including public awareness on environmental issues.

The draft legislation generally proposes to entrust implementation of environment policies framed by the Council to the Provincial Governments and Federal Ministries concerned unless it is desired by them that the execution should be entrusted to the Agency for various reasons.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFUSION

Consideration to environmental protection should not be construed to retarding the pace of development. The objective is not to slow down growth but rather to facilitate it, by optimum use of resources and allocation of investments, through environmental infusion in development planning.

PAKISTAN

BRIEFS

BODY FOR MOENJODARO AFFORESTATION--The Sind Secretary for Forest and Wildlife, Mr W A Kirmani, has been appointed as chairman of an experts committee for plantation of trees and landscaping of Moenjodaro. The committee will include Dr A. Q. Ansari, Vice-Chancellor of Sind Agriculture University, Tandojam; and Mr A. K. Khan, a noted horticulturist. A decision in this regard was taken at the first meeting of the sub-committee on planting and landscaping of Moenjodaro held yesterday under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Abdul Kadir Shaikh, Chairman of the Authority for the Preservation of Moenjodaro. [as published] The setting up of the committee was recommended by the International Consultative Committee of UNESCO on Moenjodaro, which held its session in Karachi in November last. The meeting among other matters discussed in detail the report of Mr Raymon Fosberg on 'plant echo system'. The meeting of the committee will be held in Karachi on March 27, Mr Kirmani said after the meeting. The members will visit Moenjodaro before finalising the plantation and landscaping scheme.--PPI. [Text] [Karachi DAWN in English 12 Mar 82 p 16]

CSO: 5000/5699

BRIEFS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAWS NEEDED--In the pursuit of building socialism and industrializing our nation we have created a number of concentrated industrial zones. In developing the industrial production base there are some elements that work under noxious, hot and dusty conditions. The state has issued various documents specifying worker safety and preventive and countermeasures against industrial diseases for workers. However they have not been adequately implemented. In planning and engineering the construction of factories no concern has been shown for safeguarding general sanitary conditions resulting in pollution of the environment. At some enterprises water discharged into rivers contains phenol which has seriously polluted water sources. The residents of cities and towns must put up with dust, smoke and the poisonous fumes of factories. No concern is shown for maintaining public hygiene in cities, towns and markets. We recommend that laws be quickly instituted for the protection of the living environment and that they be strictly supervised and implemented by authorities at all levels. [Text] [Article by Pham Thi Tuyet, head of the Public Health Service, Ha Nam Ninh Province] [Hanoi NHAN DAN in Vietnamese 18 Feb 82 p 3]

CSO: 5000/5702

EROSION TAKES HOUSES, FRIGHTENS POPULATION IN BENUE

Kaduna NEW NIGERIAN in English 5 Mar 82 p 9

[Article by Mohammed Salau]

[Text]

OVER 2,000 people in Ankpa town of Benue State are now living in fear.

This is because the devastating soil erosion which claimed some of their houses and properties worth millions of Naira in the last rainy season has resurfaced last week, destroying over 20 houses and various properties.

The erosion which swept through some strategic areas of the town took the inhabitants by surprise following a three-hour downpour which nearly submerged the town.

The Vice-President, Dr. Alex Ekwueme had to break protocol on his way from Makurdi to Idah during his recent visit to Benue State last week to pay an unscheduled visit to the erosion sites where he consoled the people and promised government assistance.

A lot of people whose houses and property were damaged by the erosion are now taking refuge in neighbouring villages.

Meanwhile, the people have renewed their appeal to the President, Alhaji Shehu Shagari to take cognisance of their present predicament and come to their aid.

President Shehu Shagari, had during his official visit to the state early last year directed the Lower Benue River Basin Development Authority and Federal Ministry of Water Resources to resettle the victims of the disaster and find a permanent solution to control its recurrence.

The Chairman of the LBRBDA, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan, Ciroman Keffi told newsmen on Monday that the authority had submitted its reports to the Federal Government on the issue.

He declared: "Unless money is provided, there is little the authority can do apart from the studies and suggestions made to the government, to help the affected victims of the disaster."

CSO: 5000/5697

'GREEN REVOLUTION' OFFICIAL URGES NON-POLITICIZATION

Lagos DAILY TIMES in English 6 Mar 82 p 28

[Text]

NIGERIANS have been warned not to politicise the Green Revolution introduced by the Federal Government.

The warning was given by Dr. T. S. B. Aribisala, chief consultant to the National Committee of the Green Revolution at the second bi-ennial conference of the Oyo State Farm Settlers Council held at Jebele, the headquarters of the Oyo South Local Government.

Dr. Aribisala said that the scheme was not politically established but rather to prevent famine in the country.

Dr. Aribisala said that the Farm Settlers Scheme was designed to remove all the obstacles faced by farmers in the

country, and to demonstrate carefully-planned farming systems with all obstacles to farming removed to attract young educated school leavers and provide them jobs.

In his speech, the Oyo State Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. Ayo Ojewumi, stressed that the Farm Settlers Council was established to provide means of livelihood for those that might be thrown out of job and to show that farming is a lucrative business.

The commissioner advised the council to make wise use of the aids rendered it to the benefit of the members of the council in particular and of the nation in general.

CSO: 5000/5697

BIG DRIVE TO SAVE CATTLE SPEEDS UP

Salisbury THE HERALD in English 16 Mar 82 p 1

[Text]

EMERGENCY plans to save nearly 1.5 million head of cattle from the drought were spelt out yesterday by the Minister of Agriculture, Senator Denis Norman.

He said the Cold Storage Commission had stepped up its Operation Cattle Rescue to transport tens of thousands of starving beasts up from the parched grazing of Matabeleland to the less badly affected pastures of Mashonaland.

The operation is expected to cost about \$25 million, he told a Zimbabwe Promotion Council meeting in Salisbury.

The commission, Senator Norman said, was now holding up to 12 cattle sales a week in a bid to save communal livestock.

While the OSC was even buying "rejects", the minister was worried by some farmers who were reluctant to part with their assets.

"We are hoping that the worst cattle will be bought first. Those in better condition can always share the available leaves."

Up to 1 450 000 cattle were under "severe stress" in Matabeleland, Victoria and Midlands south.

"We are moving up to four trucks a week from Bulawayo to Mashonaland for distribution," he said. "We have had co-operation from the National Railways of Zimbabwe."

Up to 200 000 cattle could be railed this season, Senator Norman estimated, and an assessment had been made of required space and grazing.

Killed

Alternatively, bought cattle could be killed or put into feedlots if grazing ran short.

He dismissed suggestions in ranching circles that stockfeeds ought to be railed to Matabeleland, explaining that it was easier to transport livestock.

Talking about the other effects of the drought, Senator Norman said the maize harvest could be slashed to just 1.4 million tonnes — half of last year's record crop.

Available maize stocks would last for six months, but the situation was precarious because the country had a commitment to supply other countries.

Failure to get a heavy

storm would result in reduced winter wheat plantings, in the face of a steep rise in consumption over the last two years, he explained. Present holdings would last until September or October.

"We cannot afford to be complacent about the crop situation," he said. "They tell me it is the worst drought yet experienced in the last 35 to 40 years."

The minister said farmers should be patient about the announcement of commodity prices.

"We will know the story about tobacco tomorrow when they open sales," he said. "I am optimistic about tobacco and cotton."

"I think cotton is in arrears. It is the role of the Government to give it the proportion it deserves."

Closing the meeting, the president of the Zimbabwe National Farmers' Association, Mr Robinson Gapare, said: "We are looking forward to an early announcement of prices."

MUZENDA WARNS OF DROUGHT RELIEF NEPOTISM

Salisbury THE HERALD in English 15 Mar 82 p 1

[Text]

ANY nepotism or favouritism in the distribution of Government relief in the drought-hit areas of Matabeleland will be sternly dealt with, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Simon Muzenda, said yesterday.

BULAWAYO

The Deputy Prime Minister told about 1 000 people at a rally in Gwanda's Jaunda Stadium that the Cabinet had decided to provide relief for the people in the affected areas, and that district councils and the district administration authorities must register all those who needed Government assistance to cushion the effects of the drought which has caused a severe crop failure in Matabeleland.

But, Mr Muzenda warned, the Government would take stern measures against anyone caught practising nepotism.

"This is a government of the people, and not a ZANU (PF) or PF-ZAPU government, and any relief given by the Government is for the people of Zimbabwe," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister warned that no one was indispensable.

"The Government will fire anyone and dissolve any council that does not fulfil the wishes of the people," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Among those who heard Mr Muzenda were members of district councils in Matabeleland South, from Matobo, Filabusi and Umsingwane.

Also present at the rally was one of the PF-ZAPU MPs for Matabeleland South, Mr Sikwili Moyo.

In an interview after the meeting, Mr Moyo said he had been invited to the meeting and had accepted "purely out of

respect for the Deputy Prime Minister".

Mr Muzenda said there were people who were criticising the Government for not "doing much for the people in two years we have been in Government".

'Enemies'

"Some of these people," said Mr Muzenda, "have served our enemies for a lifetime without raising a finger in protest."

Was two years long enough for anyone to do all that the people wanted? Mr Muzenda asked.

On the present concern in the country over arms found in some properties owned or associated with PF-ZAPU, Mr Muzenda said the Government had done everything possible to facilitate the handing

over to the national army of all weapons brought back after the war.

"After discovering arms in farms . . . we have asked ourselves why they were hidden and not delivered to the national army," said Mr Muzenda.

Mr Muzenda said people would soon be brought to court and that it would be proved what the arms were hidden for.

Mr Muzenda said the Prime Minister Mr Mugabe had said that ZAPU as a party could continue to function, but that those leaders of the party who were guilty of plotting to overthrow the Government would be dealt with.

The Deputy Prime Minister warned that unless the people themselves consolidated the country's independence "they will find that they themselves have spoiled it for themselves".

CSO: 5000/5703

FARMERS ALLEGEDLY CASHING IN ON DROUGHT

Salisbury THE HERALD in English 16 Mar 82 p 7

[Text]

BULAWAYO.

COMMUNAL land farmers in parts of the Bulilima-Mangwe district will tomorrow ask the Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, Mr Moven Mahachi, to look into alleged exorbitant charges demanded by some commercial farmers as rent for communal land cattle to graze on their lands.

A civil servant from the area said the farmers charged \$5 a month for each animal instead of the usual \$1.

Mr Mahachi, on his first visit to the area since taking over the portfolio from Dr Sekeramayi, will see farms recently bought by the Government to augment the Dombodema resettlement scheme.

He will also look into the possibilities of buying more farms in the area to meet the needs of the people from the Mphoenge and Tshitshi areas of the district.

Sources in Plumtree said yesterday that it was believed the Government wished to launch another

resettlement scheme.

"But the question of high charges for grazing demanded by some farmers in the district will feature very much because people feel the farmers, some of whom are refusing to sell their lands to the Government, are trying to capitalise on the drought in the area," a district council official said.

A schoolteacher from the Nguwanyana area, 90 km south of Plumtree, said some people had approached farmers who used to charge them at most \$1 a beast a month, and had been told the charge had risen to \$5.

"This simply means we cannot manage to graze our livestock on these farms, some of which are almost empty," he said.

Some people would soon be driving their cattle to farms 120 km from Nguwanyana which, like the neighbouring Mphoenge, Patse, Madabe and Tshingababili areas, is now a parched, dusty, pastureless bowl with dry sandy rivers and sun-baked dams.

CSO: 5000/5703

AGRITEX REPORTS THREAT OF DRY BOREHOLES

Salisbury THE HERALD in English 13 Mar 82 p 1

[Text]

BOREHOLES in Mashonaland West and Matabeleland have been dried up by drought, says the fortnightly crop and livestock Agritex report.

It said some rivers had stopped flowing, and chances of any good runoff were fast diminishing. The level of water in certain dams was critical.

Particularly affected were both Matabeleland North and South provinces as "fears of severe winter water shortages are becoming apparent".

One Mashonaland West area was without water because of dry boreholes and rivers.

In the Midlands boreholes were also drying up and major privately-owned irrigation dams were less than half full. In the Victoria province, parts of Chibh, Chiredzi and Nuuanetsi had insufficient water.

Water supplies could become serious in Mashonaland East towards the end of August.

"Deficiencies in total rainfall continue to worsen, with the southern and western areas showing the greatest shortage," says

the report.

Commercial livestock was expected to start deteriorating, and some farmers were already on supplementary feeding.

The communal stock condition was poor in the south and west, and the low bulk grazing in Victoria province was being ravaged by army-worm.

Though irrigated crops in Matabeleland were in variable condition, communal plots were total failures.

Aphids had attacked Midlands maize, otherwise most of the crop had been ensiled and reduced yields were expected from the remaining stands.

Maize in Manicaland's southern communal area was a complete failure, but Umtali North had good plots.

Early cobbing had been reported in Mashonaland Central, while some maize in Mashonaland West had been cut for silage and Mashonaland East communal farmers had nothing.

Army-worm in Victoria province was damaging maize in Sengwe and low provincial yields were expected.

RAIN RAISES HOPES, BUT SITUATION GRIM

Salisbury THE HERALD in English 1 Mar 82 p 3

[Text] **ALTHOUGH** recent rains have helped crops in Mashonaland, the situation remains unchanged in parts of Matabeleland and Victoria, where maize crop losses range from half to total.

The latest crop report, issued by Agritex, said rain in the north and east had helped the maize crop during the pollination stage. In the south and west, yield reductions of between 40 percent and 100 percent were reported.

Tobacco had also benefited from the rain and although yields were reduced, the potential was still good. Cotton and other crops were variable, with some excellent crops in the north and east.

The report said armyworm was serious in many areas.

The condition of animals in most commercial areas was still good, but in some communal areas — particularly in Matabeleland

and Victoria — livestock was very poor.

Recent rain had given a boost to grazing but bulk was seriously low in drought-stricken areas.

Water supplies were generally adequate at present, although dams and streams were below normal in some areas. Chances of good run-offs were decreasing.

The report said Manicaland maize crops ranged from fair to good in communal and commercial areas. However, conditions were bad in the southern and western parts of the province, where crops ranged from poor to total failures.

In Matabeleland South, some crops in the Filabusi and Essexvale areas had had relief, although crop failures were prevalent throughout the south and west of the province.

Rain in Victoria had saved late maize, but poor yields were still expected. The early crop would have a 30 percent yield drop and the November crop a 50 percent loss.

In some areas of the Midlands the dryland maize was a write-off, with some having been salvaged for silage. Irrigated maize was fair, but reduced yields were still expected. Armyworm attacks and outbreaks of stalk borer and aphids were reported.

In the three Mashonaland provinces, maize was

variable, with the armyworm situation under control. In some communal and small-scale farming areas, the crop had been written off.

Livestock in commercial areas throughout the country appeared to be in fair to good condition, but in the communal areas conditions ranged from poor to fair. Cattle deaths in the Midlands had been caused by Theileriosis, and brown ear ticks were a problem in all parts of the province.

SOLUTION TO NGAMO DAM POLLUTION SOUGHT

Salisbury THE HERALD in English 2 Mar 82 p 7

[Text] Gwelo's Ngamo Dam, a popular picnic spot, a mecca for anglers, and a source of a comparatively small amount of the city's drinking water supply, is polluted by an unknown substance.

When it was noticed at 2 pm last Thursday pumping was immediately stopped.

The city engineer, Mr E. H. Smith, said he did not suspect sabotage. "I think that whatever it was was an embarrassment to someone and they just got rid of it," he said. "It is an offence in terms of the Water Act to pollute any water course and we have reported the matter to the police."

Mr Smith said the pollutant, which on Thursday was in green, brown and white streaks, had drifted with the wind down to the dam wall from where the city's raw water supply is drawn off.

A sample was taken to a local paint dealer and he did not think it was paint. Further samples have been sent to the Government analyst who has been asked to identify the substance to suggest, that if any remedial treatment is required, and if it constitutes any risk to health.

"Not until we get a reply from the analyst and take any action he recommends can we restore the raw water supply from Ngamo," said Mr Smith.

Ngamo, the smallest of Gwelo's supply dams, supplies the council's raw water consumers: The Bata Shoe Company (for their tannery), the golf club, the sports club and the gliding club take off water from the pumping main and any that is not used by them carries on to the kopje filters where it is purified, taken up to the main reservoirs, and then fed throughout the city as purified water.

Dead fish were seen at Ngamo on Thursday, though very few. On Sunday the polluted water lapping the dam wall had turned green and yellow. It was odourless.

Ngamo, though very low just now, has always been a good dam for anglers.

CSO: 5000/5688

BRIEFS

DROUGHT ENDANGERS WILDLIFE--In the present drought, much has been said and done about Zimbabwe's cattle herd. But what about the millions of wild animals? A spokesman for the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management said that if rains fall in worst hit areas, a serious problem might not occur. But, game would suffer in areas encroached upon by cattle from communal and other farming areas. As water holes in these areas dried up and grazing disappeared, cattle either sought water and grazing in parks or reserves or were herded in by their owners. It is then that the threat of overgrazing of parks and wildlife land became apparent. In the Tuli Safari area near the south-western border with Botswana and South Africa such a problem could build up, but if cattle from adjoining communal lands were moved off to new pastures this problem would not arise. "Another problem we face is that people with no crops and no cattle will look upon game as their only source of food. We expect an increase in the amount of poaching in a season like this," said the spokesman. [Text] [Salisbury THE HERALD in English 2 Mar 82 p 4]

CSO: 5000/5688

GOVERNMENT SEEN UNWILLING TO REGULATE POLLUTION

Paris LE MONDE in French 3 Feb 82 p 10

[Article by Francis Caballero: "The Great Ecological Vagueness"]

[Text] It is time to make an initial ecological balance sheet for the Left. Without talking about things nuclear, where for some nothing has changed, can it be said that governmental environment policy is truly reoriented? The answer to this question is not obvious.

All begins rather well. First by a soothing feeling: "This can't be worse." Then with definite changes: the spectacular forsaking of the Larzac and of Plogoff, and the appointment of Michel Crepeau, "the most ecologically minded mayor in France."

The adjective was flattering, but the OFFICIAL JOURNAL was to be unkind to the deputy from La Rochelle. On one hand, his responsibilities were reduced to the minimum, implying a backward turn of 10 years for his ministry. On the other hand, the revelation that he did not participate in the discussion of a single one of the important recent texts pertaining to the environment: nor the 1976 city planning, protection of the environment, or classified installations laws, nor the 1977 laws on architecture and chemical products, nor the 1979 billposting law.

This unfamiliarity with problems on the national level explains the difficult beginnings, which were marked by serious blunders. Let us pass over the unfortunate choice of collaborators, excluding the unions. Let us also pass over the imprudent affirmation that "there will be no file from his ministry unavailable to journalists or the public." This statement has already been proved false by his cabinet's refusal of our request for communication.

Let us retain only the statement of intention to base his policy on "three essential axes: decentralization, the nationalizations, and European recovery." The aim is naive: These are axes that--bothersome detail--completely escape the grasp of the new minister. Apart from the doubts that one may hold about their ecological connection. Thus, for example, to nationalize PUK (Pechiney-Ugine-Kuhlman Company) means transforming a private polluter to a public one. Public polluters (like Air France and EDF [French Electric (Power) Company]) are notoriously less ineradicable than the others.

After these errors, of course, one must call attention to the budget vote and the publication of general directions for the environment. But the examination of these documents reveals a glaring poverty. In the absence of funds one could at least find a guideline. But on this point the void is complete. The omission is all the more regrettable since there exists, already, a strong and simple idea, which totally breaks with the past and is likely to lay the foundations of a "new policy": the ecology policy.

Up to now, ministers of the environment were known to be invested with assignments of "coordination," of "impetus," even of "management," but never that of regulating. It is nonetheless their statutory function. It is established that making rules protective in the area of life, is for the administrative regulators. In the same way that economic regulators are responsible for containing excesses of the market (fraud, prices...), the ecological regulators are responsible for preventing assaults of all kinds from the production system (wastes, harmful substances...). To recognize its official existence would have considerable practical consequences, especially that of putting an end to previous laxness regarding polluters.

Curiously, however, we are witnessing an evolution in the opposite direction. Governmental hostility toward laws protective of life is manifest. First Mr Lang considered doing away with the last, fragile protection of the environs of historic monuments, the veto of the architects of these monuments. Next, Mr Quilliot wanted to put a stop to the "censure" (sic) of the construction permit, and in a 12 August 1981 order, prepared by Mr d'Orano, liberalized conditions for granting it. Finally, it was the tandem of Quilliot-Crepeau that got from Parliament the abrogation of compulsory consultation of the architectural councils.

It is the world turned upside down. The night favors general interest constraints restricting freedom of construction. The Left defends the interest of private promoters, who have "the right to do what they want."

All this is to draw together two current facts. On one hand, there is the head of state's press conference, which with historic vision describes socialism as the foundation of urban civilization, ending the anarchy of cities "built any way whatever." On the other hand, a very recent poll, showing 89 percent of Frenchmen favoring a reinforcing of environmental constraints. Against the current of history and public opinion, will the government continue to navigate even longer in ecological vagueness?

9802

CSO: 5000/2068

BRIEFS

AIR POLLUTION ANTICIPATORY MEASURES--The smog that is expected to affect Athenians once again with the improvement of weather conditions will be measured by 13 devices to be installed in 11 locations around the Athens basin that will operate on a 24-hour schedule. It will thus be possible to anticipate the emergency and judge the effectiveness of antipollution measures. This was announced by Minister of Urban Planning, Housing and Environment Tritsis. The minister expressed the hope that, if everything goes according to schedule, it will be possible to inform the people 48 hours ahead of the emergency about the measures to be taken. Moreover, Deputy Minister of Industry Pitsioris has issued orders to industries in the whole country that the installation of antipollution devices must be completed by 6 October 1982. [Excerpt] [Athens TO VIMA in Greek 11 Mar 82 p 1]

SALONICA NOISE POLLUTION--Salonica--Traffic noise in Salonica has long ago gone beyond the limits allowed for the safety of residents and has reached such levels as to make this city the noisiest in Europe. This was announced yesterday by a team from the special building technique lab and from the electro-technics school of the Salonica Polytechnic School during the first day of the seminar organized by this school's transportation technique department on "Traffic and Environment in Salonica." The seminar will continue until 9 March. According to a statement by the building technique team representative, Mr Tzekakis, who measured noise levels in streets and balconies in Salonica, results show that the average traffic noise level in the city's central streets ranges from 75 to 90.5 decibels (highest acceptable limit is 65 decibels); as for residential balconies, it ranges from 64 to 76 decibels (highest acceptable limit is 55 decibels). The speaker emphasized that curbing traffic noise is closely related to generally solving the traffic problem. He proposed a number of measures contributing to such a solution, such as the use of less noisy vehicles, the opening of peripheral roads for large vehicles and trucks, the replacement of busses by trolley or street cars, etc. [Text] [Athens RIZOSPASTIS in Greek 4 Mar 82 p 11]

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